

Message Text

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PAGE 01 AMMAN 04049 041028Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 STR-07 /038 W
-----016677 041314Z /47

R 040737Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5985

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

USLO RIYADH

CONFIDENTIAL AMMAN 4049

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, XF

SUBJECT: EFFORTS TO REMOVE COCA COLA FROM BOYCOTT LIST

REF: A) AMMAN 3483 (NOTAL), B) STATE 104279, C) RIYADH 316

1. SAM AYOUB, PRESIDENT OF COCA COLA MIDDLE EAST, CALLED ON AMBASSADOR MORNING OF APRIL 30 TO DISCUSS RESULTS OF HIS MEETINGS IN ABU DHABI AND SAUDI ARABIA AND HIS PROSPECTIVE MEETINGS IN JORDAN CONCERNING EFFORTS TO REMOVE COCA COLA FROM SAUDI BOYCOTT LIST. AYOUB DEPARTED JORDAN MAY 3, WITHOUT PRESENTING CASE TO GOJ LEADERSHIP.

2. AYOUB INFORMED AMBASSADOR THAT DURING MEETING WITH PRINCE FAHD, FAHD TELEPHONED SAUDI BOYCOTT OFFICER, ABDULLAH HARAR, AND INSTRUCTED HARAR TO TAKE INITIATIVE IN EFFORTS TO REMOVE COKE FROM BOYCOTT LIST. IN SUBSEQUENT MEETING WITH HARAR, AYOUB CONFIRMED SAUDI CONFIDENTIAL

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INTENTION TO TAKE INITIATIVE AT NEXT BOYCOTT CONFERENCE. SEVEN ARAB STATES HAD PREVIOUSLY REQUESTED POSTPONEMENT OF THIS CONFERENCE WHILE SAUDI ARABIA AND ONE OTHER (UNIDENTIFIED) STATE HAD REQUESTED IMMEDIATE CONVENING. AS RESULT OF AYOUB VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA, SAUDI ARABIA WILL ALSO REQUEST POSTPONEMENT. AYOUB HAS ADVISED THAT CONFERENCE WILL PROBABLY TAKE PLACE

IN CAIRO IN ABOUT TWO MONTHS.

3. FOLLOWING MEETINGS IN SAUDI ARABIA, AYOUB TRAVELED TO ABU DHABI TO MEET WITH SHEIKH SUOUR, IDENTIFIED AS CHIEF OF ROYAL CABINET. SUOUR HOLDS LETTER OF INTENT FROM COCA COLA REGARDING BOTTLING PLANT FOR UAE AND THEREFORE HAS PERSONAL INTEREST IN PROBLEM AS WELL AS SUFFERING SOME EMBARRASSMENT BY COKE REMAINING ON BOYCOTT LIST. AFTER RECEIVING CONFIRMATION FROM HARAR BY TELEPHONE THAT SAUDIS NOW COMMITTED TO LEADING EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF COKE, SUOUR PROMISED THAT UAE WOULD ALSO VOTE FOR REMOVAL FROM BLACKLIST.

4. SAUDI/COKE STRATEGY IS TO ASSURE POSITIVE VOTING BY FIRST FOUR STATES THAT WILL BE CALLED TO VOTE ACCORDING TO ARAB LEAGUE (ARABIC) ALPHABETICAL ORDER. THEN SAUDI ARABIA, VOTING FIFTH, WILL CAST ITS POSITIVE VOTE. MOMENTUM DEVELOPED WITH FIRST FIVE VOTES IS EXPECTED TO CARRY DAY FOR COKE. FIRST FOUR STATES TO VOTE ARE JORDAN, UAE, BAHRAIN AND ALGERIA. HARAR ADVISED AYOUB THAT HE CAN DELIVER BAHRAIN, AND ALGERIA ALREADY HAS EXTENSIVE DEALINGS WITH COKE. PURPOSE OF AYOUB VISIT TO JORDAN WAS TO LINE UP REMAINING VOTE OF IMPORTANCE. (HARAR SAID THAT HE CAN ALSO DELIVER QATAR, AND AYOUB IS CONSIDERING A VISIT TO KUWAIT AFTER RETURN TO STATES FROM PRESENT TRIP.)

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5. SUBSEQUENTLY AMBASSADOR MENTIONED TO KING HUSSEIN AYOUB'S WISH TO SEE HIM PROVIDING SOME OF THE BACKGROUND AND KING SAID HE WOULD SEE AYOUB.

6. AS IT SUBSEQUENTLY TURNED OUT, OBLIGATION IN AQABA PREVENTED KING MEETING WITH AYOUB. ATTEMPT TO ARRANGE APPOINTMENT WITH PRIME MINISTER BADRAN ALSO FAILED. AYOUB DEPARTED JORDAN ON MAY 3 WITHOUT HAVING HAD OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS COCA COLA SITUATION WITH JORDANIAN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP. HE ADVISED EMBASSY THAT HE INTENDS TO RETURN TO JORDAN TO MEET WITH KING AND WILL COORDINATE TRAVEL AND APPOINTMENT REQUEST WITH EMBASSY.

7. BASED ON HIS MEETINGS WITH LOWER LEVEL GOJ OFFICIALS, AYOUB CONFIRMED OUR EARLIER JUDGMENT THAT GOJ IS VERY SENSITIVE TO REGIONAL POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ANY PUBLIC ACTION IT MAY BE ASKED TO TAKE REGARDING BOYCOTT, THOUGH IT MAY STILL BE MOVED TO SUPPORT SAUDI INITIATIVE. AS APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITIES ARISE, WE WILL TAKE OCCASION TO SUPPORT COCA COLA

INTEREST, BUT WE SUSPECT MEETING BETWEEN KING AND
RANKING COKE OFFICIAL STILL NECESSARY, AND EVEN WITH
SUCH MEETING SUCCESS IS STILL NOT GUARANTEED.

PICKERING

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BOYCOTTS, MEETINGS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 may 1978
Decapton Date: 01 jan 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978AMMAN04049
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780190-0796
Format: TEL
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780595/aaaadctf.tel
Line Count: 120
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 93f498a4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 AMMAN 3483, 78 STATE 104279, 78 RIYADH 316
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2797769
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EFFORTS TO REMOVE COCA COLA FROM BOYCOTT LIST
TAGS: ETRD, XF, COCA COLA, (AYOUB, SAM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/93f498a4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014